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INTERIOR DEPARTMENT TERRITORIAL PAPERS: NEW MEXICO, 1851-1914

On the 15 rolls of this microfilm publication, M364, are reproduced the records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior relating to the administration of the Territory of New Mexico.

New Mexico was part of the area ceded to the United States by Mexico under provisions of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo signed on February 2, 1848. The act of Congress establishing the Territory of New Mexico was approved on September 9, 1850 (9 Stat. 446). Originally the Territory included parts of Arizona, Nevada, and Colorado; later its area was increased by the Gadsden Purchase of 1853. With the establishment of the Colorado Territory in 1861 and the Arizona Territory in 1863, New Mexico was reduced to its present area. It was admitted into the Union as a State by proclamation of President William Howard Taft on January 6, 1912, in conformance with an enabling act of Congress approved on June 20, 1910 (36 Stat. 557).

From the earliest days of the Republic until 1873, the Department of State was responsible for the supervision of Territorial governments. An act approved on March 1, 1873 (17 Stat. 484), transferred this responsibility to the Department of the Interior, where it has since remained.

The Secretary of the Interior, during the period covered by this microcopy, did not delegate responsibility for supervising Territorial affairs to any of the bureaus of his Department but kept it within the Office of the Secretary. Territorial business was ordinarily referred to the Patents and Miscellaneous Division which, until its abolition in 1907, was part of the Secretary's Office. Only the incoming correspondence of this Division relating to the New Mexico Territory is reproduced on this microfilm publication. Copies of the outgoing correspondence are scattered throughout a series of volumes of letters sent and have not been included in this microcopy. Correspondence relating to appointments of Territorial officials, which was handled by the Appointments Division of the Office of the Secretary, which has not been included.

In April 1907 the handling of correspondence of the Office of the Secretary was assigned to a central Mails and Files Division. Thereafter, incoming correspondence and copies of outgoing correspondence of the Secretary's Office were filed together under a numerical subject classification system. The records filed under the classifications relating to the Territories were transferred to the custody of the Division of Territories and Island Possessions when that Division was established in 1934. Although the correspondence files beginning in 1907 that relate to New Mexico Territory are now among the records of the Office of Territories (formerly the Division of Territories and Island Possessions), they are cited in this microfilm publication as records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior.

The records reproduced in this microcopy are in the three categories described as follows:

(1) Transcripts of executive proceedings of the Governors of the Territory, October 8, 1874-December 31, 1906. These were transmitted annually or semiannually by the Secretary of the Territory to the President of the United States and were customarily referred by the President to the Secretary of the Interior. The proceedings are a record of the official acts of the Governor and include copies of proclamations, letters of appointments, lists of appointments, oaths of office, pardon letters, death warrants for condemned criminals, offers of rewards, extradition orders, minutes of meetings, statements

of election results, messages to the legislature, and other such documents. The proceedings are in the form of a daily record except those for the years 1885-88, which are in the form of lists arranged by type of action rather than journals of entries in chronological order. Among these records there are no transcripts before October 1874 or for the periods October 1875-September 1876, October 1883-June 1885, January-June 1889, and January-June 1903. Transcripts of proceedings for the years 1907-12 are part of the subject classified files described under (3) below.

(2) Letters received by the Patents and Miscellaneous Division, April 1851-May 29, 1907. These consist of communications relating to public buildings and grounds, September 18, 1858-February 16, 1899; the Adobe Palace (Palace of the Governors) in Santa Fe, September 1867-December 14, 1900; the inspection of coal mines, November 12, 1892-May 9, 1907; and miscellaneous subjects, April 1851-May 29, 1907. The letters dated before 1873 relate to matters for which the Secretary of the Interior had specific responsibility, particularly the Territorial library and public buildings.

Before 1881 all incoming correspondence of the Patents and Miscellaneous Division was arranged in one series under a number of subject headings. By 1881, however, the system of assigning numbers to correspondence received by date of receipt had been fully developed, and from that date to 1907 most of the communications received were filed in a single chronological series. At an undetermined date the records relating to territories were withdrawn from these two series and arranged in a separate subject series that includes the letters filmed under this category. Most of the letters filed under a subject heading are arranged chronologically by date of receipt, but in some cases several letters relating to a specific subject are filed with the first letter on that subject. Copies of printed reports, and messages, proclamations, legislative bills, pamphlets, newspaper clippings, and the like, often without any covering letter, were sometimes placed in these files.

(3) Subject classified files of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, 1906-14 and 1923. These include incoming correspondence, copies of outgoing correspondence, reports, memoranda, transcripts of the executive proceedings of the Governors of the Territory, clippings, legal papers, printed documents, and other records. These records were filed under the general heading of 9 (Territories) - 5 (New Mexico). This file in turn was divided into 28 headings 9-5-2 to 9-5-29, some of which were further subdivided by subject. No file numbered 9-5-1 has been located. Some of the major file headings are Progress and Development, Annual Reports, Executive Proceedings, etc.; Investigation of Land Transactions; Miscellaneous Matters; Legislation; Statehood; Territorial and School Lands; and Bond Issues. Most of the records within each heading or subheading are arranged chronologically. Those dated in 1923 are copies of a few documents concerning the transfer of Territorial archives from the Library of Congress to the State Museum of New Mexico in that year.

The records reproduced on Rolls 1-9 of this microcopy are part of a body of records in the National Archives designated as Record Group 48, Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior; those reproduced on Rolls 10-15 are part of a body of records in Record Group 126, Records of the Office of Territories.

In the same record groups in the National Archives are other records relating to the New Mexico Territory. Among these are the records of the Appointments Division of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, which include copies of nominations and commissions of many of the Governors and Secretary of the Territory, letters of recommendation for Territorial appointments, correspondence relating to complaints and charges against Territorial officials, and applications for leave of absence. Among the central classified files of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, begun in 1907, are information folders concerning individual Governors and Secretaries of New Mexico and records on applications for appointments.

There are also related records in other record groups. In Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, are Territorial papers for New Mexico, 1851-72 (4 vols.), and appointment papers relating to Territorial officials for the same period. In Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, are records of the New Mexico Superintendency, 1849-74, fragmentary records of individual agencies as late as 1882, and many other records relating to Indian affairs in the New Mexico Territory. Material is also to be found in Record Group 46, Records of the United States Senate; in Record Group 49, Records of the Bureau of Land Management (formerly General Land Office); in Record Group 60, General Records of the Department of Justice; in Record Group 70, Records of the Bureau of Mines; in Record Group 98, Records of United States Army Commands; in Record Group 107, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War; in Record Group 115, Records of the Bureau of Reclamation; and in Record Group 233, Records of the United States House of Representatives.

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